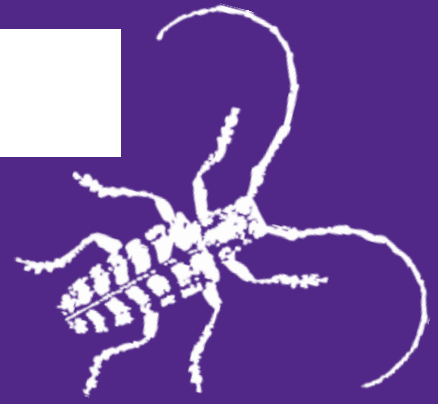


Kansas State University Extension Entomology Newsletter

For Agribusinesses, Applicators, Consultants, Extension Personnel & Homeowners

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June 20, 2019 #11

Fall Webworm
Alfalfa Update
Bug Joke of the Week

Fall Webworm

The first generation of fall webworm (*Hyphantria cunea*) is now prevalent in most of Kansas with webs present on certain trees. Fall webworm nests are very noticeable, with silk webbing enclosing the ends of branches and foliage or leaves (Figures 1 and 2).



Fig 1. Fall webworm nest on walnut tree (Auth-- Raymond Cloyd, KSU)



Fig 2. Fall webworm nest on birch tree (Auth-- Raymond Cloyd, KSU)

Fall webworm larvae or caterpillars are pale-green, yellow to nearly white, with two black spots on each abdominal segment. Caterpillars are covered with long, white hairs (Figure 3).



Fig 3. Close-up of fall webworm larvae (Auth-
-Raymond Cloyd, KSU)

Fall webworm caterpillars feed on a wide range of trees, including: birch, crabapple, maples, hickory, pecan, mulberry, and walnut. Fall webworm caterpillars, unlike eastern tent caterpillars, remain within the enclosed webbing and do not venture out to feed. Caterpillars consume leaves, resulting in naked branches with webbing attached that contains fecal deposits or 'caterpillar poop.' These nests will eventually dry-up as the caterpillars pupate, with adults' eclosing (emerging) from pupae later on.

Feeding by fall webworm caterpillars may ruin the aesthetic appeal of infested trees; however, the damage is typically not directly harmful to trees—especially larger trees. The most effective method of dealing with fall webworm infestations is to simply prune-out the webs that enclose the caterpillars, place into a plastic bag, and dispose of immediately. Insecticide sprays may not be effective because the caterpillars remain in the webbing while feeding; thus reducing exposure to spray residues. If insecticides are used, be sure to use high-volume spray applications that penetrate the protective webbing, or use a rake to disrupt or open-up the webbing so that the insecticide spray contacts the caterpillars.

Raymond Cloyd

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Alfalfa Update

Potato leafhoppers are rapidly increasing throughout alfalfa fields in north central Kansas for two reasons: 1) potato leafhopper adults are still migrating in and 2) the eggs are hatching and nymphs seem to be everywhere. These nymphs are very small and very shy – which means they are easily under counted as they hop to the underside of leaves, or even off the leaves, at the least disturbance.



Alfalfa weevils mating—(photo by T. Sexton)



Parasitized Alfalfa Caterpillar

Alfalfa weevil adults have mostly migrated out of alfalfa fields in north central Kansas, however there are a few that pupated late and that are just emerging out of their pupal cells. Interesting, at least to us, was that some of these adults were mating (see picture). Most of the literature reports alfalfa weevils mating in the late summer, fall/winter -- not soon after becoming adults.

Alfalfa or garden webworms are also relatively common in alfalfa, where they may cause a problem in new alfalfa, and soybeans. The next generation will probably be more problematic in small soybeans because there will probably be more webworms as this generation is more of a “spring board” generation.

Alfalfa caterpillars (see picture of larva with attached parasitoid eggs) are also quite common in alfalfa fields as are the white and/or yellow butterflies that they develop into. However, they have not ever been found in densities great enough to cause any negative impact on yield.

Kansas Insect Newsletter

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Bug Joke of the Week

Q: Why Was The Butterfly Upset When It Went To The Dance?

A: Come To Find Out—It Was A Moth Ball

Raymond Cloyd

HOME

Sincerely,

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